

## OUT OF HOME INVESTIGATIONS (OHI)

The relationships, causative factors, and dynamics between child(ren) and alleged perpetrator(s) are different in investigations involving family situations and child caring facilities. Realizing these differences, the Out of Home Investigations (OHI) Unit functions to investigate referrals alleging child abuse and neglect in those child caring facilities. These facilities include licensed foster homes, licensed and license exempt and accredited residential treatment centers, licensed and license exempt day care providers and public and private schools.

The OHI Unit consists of sixteen investigators, one field supervisor and a unit manager. The sixteen investigators are assigned by geographic area and are supervised by the field supervisor and unit manager. The field supervisor assists with some administrative duties as well as consulting with field staff on cases, tracking of cases, supervisory review of fifty percent of cases, and coordinating of peer record review. The unit manager maintains an office in Jefferson City with one full time clerical staff. Investigative records are maintained in the central office regardless of where the investigation took place.

The OHI Unit has no regulatory responsibility or authority over any of the entities it investigates. The OHI Unit does share investigative information with those responsible for regulating the particular child caring facility being investigated. Below are examples of when this might occur:

- During an investigation on a licensed residential treatment center, information is shared with the state Residential Program Unit who license and regulate residential treatment centers.
- During an investigation in a school, information is shared with the superintendent of schools and the school board.
- During an investigation of a licensed day care facility, information is shared with the Bureau of Health Care who licenses and regulates daycare facilities.
- During a foster home investigation, information is shared with other Children's Division staff that do license and regulate licensed foster homes.

The data tables provided illustrate that the investigations completed by the OHI Unit are spread roughly evenly across the program areas investigated. Of the four program areas investigated by the Out of Home Investigations Unit approximately 25% are in foster homes, 25% in residential treatment centers, 25% in day care facilities and 25% are in schools. This distribution has remained fairly consistent over time. The percentage of probable cause findings for each type has remained relatively consistent over this five year period. The percentage rate of probable cause findings tends to be lower than that rate in family

investigations. The difference may be attributed to the fact that alleged perpetrators who are investigated by the OHI Unit are professional, trained staff who have been screened prior to employment and then supervised to some extent in the performance of their jobs.

There have been statutory and subsequent policy changes which significantly affect the investigation process. A recent statutory change mandated when there are allegations of child abuse/neglect by school or day care employees, the Children's Division is prohibited from interviewing these alleged victims at the facility where the alleged abuse/neglect occurred. This has resulted in these interviews occurring in the parents homes, usually after normal work hours. This has added significant staff time to these investigations. There is proposed legislation which could change this language to allow alleged victim interviews at schools and day cares, but at a different location in the facility than where the abuse/neglect allegedly occurred. This would make the investigation process more efficient without compromising quality of the investigation.

There were statutory changes in the last legislative session which affects child abuse/neglect investigations. The standard of proof for a positive finding of abuse/neglect was changed from Probable Cause to Preponderance of the evidence. This is a higher standard and may affect the number of cases in which abuse/neglect is found. This standard became effective August 28, 2004.

The following data covers the last five fiscal years, SFY-2000 through SFY-04. These numbers are broken down by type of investigation. The data system identifies the type of report by the relationship code entered into the system. The "others" category signifies those OHI reports which the system could not identify as belonging to one of the recognized areas. Please note, the following numbers are not only children in out-of-home care, but all children served through OHI.

<b>FY 2000</b>	<b>FOSTER PARENT</b>	<b>DAYCARE</b>	<b>INSTIT. STAFF</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>TOTAL REPORTS</b>	335	356	374	381	67	1513
<b>PROBABLE CAUSE</b>	36	42	55	32	15	180
<b>% OF P.C.</b>	10.74	11.79	14.70	8.33	22.38	11.89

<b>FY 2001</b>	<b>FOSTER PARENT</b>	<b>DAYCARE</b>	<b>INSTIT. STAFF</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>TOTAL REPORTS</b>	394	454	513	498	77	1936
<b>PROBABLE CAUSE</b>	39	51	69	38	20	217
<b>% OF P.C.</b>	9.89	11.23	13.45	7.63	25.9	11.21

<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FOSTER PARENT</b>	<b>DAYCARE</b>	<b>INSTIT. STAFF</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>TOTAL REPORTS</b>	404	497	469	532	81	1983
<b>PROBABLE CAUSE</b>	49	61	46	38	15	209
<b>% OF P.C.</b>	12.13	12.27	9.80	7.14	18.51	10.54

<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FOSTER PARENT</b>	<b>DAYCARE</b>	<b>INSTIT. STAFF</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>TOTAL REPORTS</b>	446	408	471	546	93	1964
<b>PROBABLE CAUSE</b>	37	46	49	36	17	185
<b>% of P.C.</b>	8.29	11.27	10.40	6.59	18.27	9.41

<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FOSTER PARENT</b>	<b>DAYCARE</b>	<b>INSTIT. STAFF</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>TOTAL REPORTS</b>	506	399	335	395	96	1731
<b>PROBABLE CAUSE</b>	61	37	55	46	6	205
<b>% of P.C.</b>	12.05	9.27	19.29	11.64	6.25	11.84